

March 13, 2012
Labor Committee
In Support of SB No. 352

My name is Ada Merrill and I am the childcare Director of Seastar Explorers FDC LLC which is located in my home at 41 Moulthrop Street, Ansonia, CT 06401. I have worked in the childcare industry for over 20 years, but I recently obtained my CT childcare license in April 2009.

The children in my care are taught more than just the basic academics to help them succeed in kindergarten. At Seastar Explorers childcare, the children are exposed to art, social studies, language, ASL, science and math. By making learning fun, the children develop a thirst for learning. Since one third of my children are exceptional learners, I have invested a great deal of money to make sure the children have the best learning tools as possible at an early age.

One of the third party payments that I accept is Care 4 Kids. In the two years that I have accepted Care 4 Kids; their rates have not increased and they offer no bonus incentives, no help for continued education or classroom supplies. In order to continue to provide good quality childcare, we need Care 4 Kids to increase their rates, offer assistance for continued education to providers, a stipend for classroom supplies, and most of all recognize our work as early childhood educators.

Collective bargaining gives providers a way to address reimbursement rates and problems that affect our day to day work. The executive order was the first step and we cannot stop here. Now we need strong collective bargaining language so that children can continue to receive quality early education and care.

Ada Merrill
Ansonia, CT